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CBC Newsletter

for members of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., ornithological society of the Carolinas

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North Carolina Foothills
September 19-21, 2003

There is still time to register for the CBC meeting in Hickory, NC, September 19-21. The registration form is in the July/August newsletter and on the CBC website. Two beginning bird walks have been added: Saturday at 1 pm and Sunday at 8 am. The Saturday night speaker has been changed to Jim Mason, who will present a program on Barred Owls. See you in Hickory!

Winter 2004 in the South Carolina Low Country

Mark your calendars and make plans to attend the Carolina Bird Club's winter meeting in Beaufort, SC, **January 29-February 1, 2004**. Our headquarters will be the Ramada Limited (2001 Boundary Street, Beaufort, SC 29902, 843-524-2144). The room rate is $50 per night, plus tax.

Some of the field trips offered will be all-day trips to Pritchard and Spring Islands (fee), ACE Basin boat tours, and Friday and Saturday morning and afternoon trips to the Savannah Spoil Site.

The Spoil Site is generally closed to the public, but we have received special permission to enter. **Early registration and signatures on forms are mandatory** for the Savannah Spoil Site trips. Forms will be available at the CBC registration desk at the Hickory meeting, when each person registering will need to include their address, phone number, and sign their signature on two forms. To register for this trip, please contact Van Atkins at 2040 Church Creek Drive, Charleston, SC 29414 or vatkins@knology.net. Van will mail you the forms to complete if you aren't able to attend the Hickory meeting. More information about these trips and others will appear in the November newsletter.

Upcoming CBC Meetings

Fontana, NC - April 30-May 2, 2004
Augusta, GA - Sept. 24-26, 2004
Atlantic Beach, NC - Sept. 28-30, 2005

CBC is Traveling!

Look inside for details on CBC trips to Oklahoma and New Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Savannah Spoil Site, and Lake Mattamuskeet.

CBC Travels to Oklahoma and New Mexico in May 2004

By John Dole

Prairies, mesquite, and mesas will be the backdrops for a trip in May 2004 to the Southern Great Plains of Oklahoma and New Mexico. This area of the country has a broad array of habitats from prairie playas and gleaming lakes to oak, juniper, and pinyon pine woodlands. While the signature bird species of the Southern Great Plains is the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, hundreds of other species can be found.

Participants will gather in Oklahoma City, where we will be greeted with the raucous calls of Great-tailed Grackles. The next day we will begin our trip in the Wichita Mountains and other areas of southwest Oklahoma. In the oak and juniper woodlands of Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge, we will look for the endangered Black-capped Vireo. On Mt. Scott, we will search for Canyon, Rock, and Bewick's Wrens and Rufous-crowned Sparrows. A visit to Hackberry Flats for nesting Black-necked Stilts and migrating shorebirds will round out the day. The next morning will be spent in the mesquite-rich area around El Dorado looking for Ladder-backed and Golden-crown Woodpeckers, Verdin, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Swainson's Hawk, and the newly-split Black-crested Titmouse. The afternoon will be spent driving through tall, mixed, and finally, shortgrass prairie to the Black Mesa of Oklahoma and New Mexico. Along the way we will bird the Great Plains playas, which should be teaming with White-faced Ibis, ducks, shorebirds, and breeding Yellow-headed Blackbirds, depending on the rains.

Two days will be spent birding in various habitats around the Black Mesa. In the short grass prairies and prairie dog towns we will search for Swainson's and Ferruginous Hawks, Burrowing Owl, Cassin's Sparrow, Lark Bunting, and Scaled Quail. In the rocky canyons we hope to find Golden Eagle, Chihuahuan Raven, and Prairie Falcon. If we are lucky, we may hear the low moaning call of the Greater Roadrunner and see it's rapid sprints and expressive crest. The riparian woodlands host Lewis's Woodpecker, Cassin's Kingbird, Say's Phoebe, Western Wood-Pewee, Bullock's Oriole, Lesser Goldfinch, and possibly migrating western warblers, vireos, Empidonax flycatchers, Lazuli Bunting, and Western Tanagers. The mesquite scrub is the home to Black-throated Sparrow and Curve-billed Thrasher. We will look for Scrub and Pinyon Jays, Canyon Towhee, Bushtit, Oak Titmouse, Mountain Chickadee, and Western Towhee in the oak, pinyon pine, and juniper woodlands. Black-chinned Hummingbirds will be at the feeders. At least one evening will be spent listening for Western Screech-Owl and the ringing calls of the Common Poorwill. Small flocks of the impressive Black-billed Magpie may show up anywhere. In addition to wonderful birds, the Black Mesa area of Oklahoma and New Mexico is also rich in history, western butterflies, and fossilized dinosaur footprints.

If time permits, we may take a side trip to Capulin Mountain National Monument for Mountain Bluebird, Virginia's Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Green-tailed Towhee or to the farmlands north of Boise City to look for Mountain Plover.

The last birding day will be the ride back to Oklahoma City for departure. If there is interest and time, a detour to the Great Salts Plains National Wildlife Refuge can be made to see nesting Snowy Plovers and interior Least Terns.

Exact dates and cost will be determined soon. For more information contact John Dole at 1502 Miriam Avenue, Garner, NC, 27529; 919-662-0785; or john_dole@ncsu.edu.

CBC Venture to Trinidad and Tobago in November 2004

By Simon Thompson

Scarlet Ibis, Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Oilbird, Copper-rumped and Ruby-Topaz Hummingbirds, Long-billed Starthroat, Bearded Bellbird, Channel-billed Toucan, and Purple Honeycreeper are just some of the birds we may see on the special Carolina Bird Club Venture to Trinidad and Tobago November 8-18, 2004. We will spend seven days at the comfortable Asa Wright Nature Center based in the hills above Port-of-Spain, and take daily excursions out into the rich and varied habitats of the island. These excursions will include freshwater swamps for Pinnated Bittern and Azure Gallinule, savanna for Red-breasted Blackbird and Red-bellied Macaw, and an evening boat ride through the mangroves in Caroni Swamp looking for Red-capped Cardinal and Bicolored Conebill, before watching the evening flight of Scarlet Ibis coming into roost in the mangroves. This spectacular sight has to be one of the wonders of the bird world.

Ruby-Topaz Hummingbird

After leaving Trinidad, we take a short flight to her sister island of Tobago, an island very Caribbean in character compared to Trinidad. There will be great birding as we watch Red-billed Tropicbirds from the cliff tops and search for the very rare White-tailed Sabrewing (hummingbird) in the montane habitat. In addition to birding, we'll have the chance for other activities, such as swimming and snorkeling.

This tour is restricted to 12 participants and will be led by CBC member and Ventures owner, Simon Thompson. The cost is $2,650 from Miami (includes international airfare) and the single supplement is $300. Contact the Ventures office for a flyer, itinerary, and birdlist.

Ventures, PO Box 1095, Skyland, NC 28776
828-253-4247
Travel@birdventures.com
www.BirdVentures.com

Screech Owl, the Moon, and Mars

By Reece Mitchell

Recently, due to medication, my day begins about 4 am. The moon was near full as I went for a 5 am walk one morning. As I passed alongside a small lake I heard two Eastern Screech-Owls calling. One was on either side of the water and I stopped and listened for some minutes.

As I looked across the lake the bird to my right flew across the water. As it did so it passed just under the most brilliant Mars in a couple thousand years and the moon, higher in the sky than the planet, shined on the upper surface of the owl's wings.

In seconds the bird disappeared into the trees and my first thought was, "I wish I could have shared that with someone," and "What a picture it would have made." As I walked on, however, I realized that no photo could come close to capturing the magic of the encounter and the image is mine alone.

I'm sure we all have such "snapshots" stored away. The brief singing of a Hooded Warbler on a blooming twig of Carolina Silverbell, or rounding a bend in the trail and coming on a pile of scarlet and black feathers that instantly resolves itself into a sunning Scarlet Tanager, which disappears almost before it registers on the brain. A special kind of "life list," and for me, these images will never fade until I do.

Feathered Features

New North Carolina Bird Book Finally, a bird book that covers the WHOLE state of North Carolina! The Carolina Bird Club has formalized an agreement with Falcon Press to publish a bird finding guide for North Carolina, with an expected release date of early 2005. The Executive Committee of the Carolina Bird Club initiated this project at the January 2003 meeting. This project is a collaborative effort of many volunteers. Marshall Brooks and Mark Johns have agreed to serve as co-editors of the guide, and Karen Bearden, Marilyn Westphal, and Dwayne Martin are serving as regional coordinators in identifying sites and volunteers. We're proud the income from the sale of the guide will go into a special CBC fund to further bird conservation and research in the Carolinas. Look for future updates in the newsletter.

Christmas Bird Count Information Needed The November issue of the *CBC Newsletter* will include a list of Christmas Bird Counts in both Carolinas. Compilers, please send your count information (location, date, complier name, phone number, and e-mail) **no later than November 1** to the Newsletter Editor at Karen Bearden, 1809 Lakepark Drive, Raleigh, NC 27612 or chickadeebirders@earthlink.net. Thanks to those who have already provided information.

Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds Written by Giff Beaton, Paul Sykes, Jr. and John Parrish, Jr., this 156-page book of the Georgia Ornithological Society has just been released. Covering 446 species, this is the first Georgia update since 1986. For Carolina birders who bird in Georgia (our fall 2004 CBC meeting will be held in Augusta, GA), this checklist will be a welcome addition to one's birding library.

Research and Programming Grants The Grants Committee of the Carolina Bird Club announces the availability of funds to support student research concerning North and/or South Carolina birds or secondary school programming designed to promote an interest by students in birds. We anticipate two awards will be made each year to institutions in North and South Carolina to support research projects or bird-related programming. The average award will be up to $500.

Application receipt deadline is October 10, 2003. Grant project periods will begin November 14, 2003. Applications should be made through an educational or non-profit institution. For more information please contact CBC Grants Committee Chairperson, Bob Ellis, at PO Box 6287, Columbia, SC 29260 or ellis29205@aol.com.

Welcome New Members: **Lorraine V. Brown**, Greenville, SC; **Dawn M. Carroll**, Wilmington, NC; **Tommie Castleman**, Winston-Salem, NC; **Margaret & Bill Dunson**, Galax, VA; **Billy Fuller**, Greer, SC; **David Keener,** Hickory, NC; **Mark Owenby**, Durham, NC; **Bob Buckanon**, Durham, NC; **George & Doris Revelle**, Cary, NC; **Henry & Weslyn Strickland**, Naples, FL; **Melanie Wall**, Hillsborough, NC; and **Cassie Willis**, Pinehurst, NC.

Deceased Member: **Wilhelmina Leman**, Durham, NC.

CBC MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY UPDATE

The Carolina Bird Club is updating the membership directory. Please send your current e-mail address to Headquarter Secretary, Tullie Johnson, at tullie.johnson@ncmail.net.

The Hawk Watch

By Bob Lathlaen

Forty pairs of glasses sweep the sky.
Nothing but clouds and mountain smoke.
On this summit the air is still, but my lungs cry out for more.

Far below, atop the trees, appear three Broad-wings,
Struggling to fly with wings meant to soar.
And so the morning goes. Three hawks.

A north breeze stirs.
The clouds slide off, and the smoky wisps dissolve.
Shafts of sun and enough blue sky to patch a Dutchman's pants.
It's clearing!

Standing on a boulder, I raise my glasses and shout, "Sharpie."
Another and another while the breeze picks up,
the sun now constant, the sky bright blue.
Here it comes overhead—narrow square tail, soft easy glide.
Sleek and deadly.

"There's a kettle by the bridge." All the glasses turn.
"Those tiny specks are Broad-wings?"
The sky in turmoil must be a hundred—a tower in the sky.

Circling, climbing the helix,
wheeling,
banking,
the kettle boils with life.

Reaching the top by twos and threes,
They peel off and head for us.
Then, just above our heads!
And they will glide for miles.

Alone in the woods, what drew you to gather
with thousands of your kind,
to soar down great rivers and this Blue Ridge?
White breasts, broad tails.
Here you come, on the north wind.
And there you go.

My spirit soars, gliding with you on the wind.

Editor's note: Bob shared this poem with members at the CBC spring meeting in Clemson, SC. He was inspired to write this after his experience at Hook Mountain in the Palisades in New York.

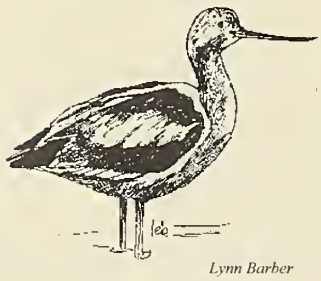
CBC Bonus Field Trips

You don't have to wait for our regular CBC meetings to join other members on field trips!

Savannah Spoil Site - Oct. 4

The Savannah Spoil Site is equal to Huntington Beach State Park as one of the best places to see unusual birds in South Carolina. The Spoil Site is closed to the public, but thanks to the hard work of Steve Calver and others, organized groups can still tour the area. Dennis Forsythe has made arrangements with Steve to lead a tour for the Carolina Bird Club on Saturday, October 4. We'll meet at the entrance at 7 am. The Spoil Site tour will end around 1 pm, when Dennis will lead us to the Laurel Hill Wildlife Drive in nearby Savannah National Wildlife Refuge. How long we stay will depend on the birds, the weather, and the energy level of the group. We will cover both the Spoil Site and the Wildlife Drive at the winter 2004 meeting in late January, but the birds in October should be significantly different.

The official bird list for the Spoil Site has reached 263, with reports of 16 more species. Great fall birds have included White Pelican, White-winged Tern, Wilson's Phalarope, and Hudsonian Godwit. In addition, this might be the best place in the Carolinas to find American Avocet. There is no fee for this trip, but please only make reservations if you are certain you can attend. The tour is limited to 20 participants, and bad weather could cancel the trip. Make a reservation by completing and mailing the form on the next page. Headquarter Secretary, Tullie Johnson, will mail you a form that needs to be signed before the trip.



Lynn Barber

Bring your scope (if you can), water, lunch, and insect repellant. There are no bathroom facilities. If it rains, we may have to walk, so be prepared for mud. There is plenty of lodging in nearby Hardeeville, SC. For more information contact Dennis at Dennis.Forsythe@citadel.edu, forsythed@earthlink.com, or 843-795-3996 (h).

Directions to Spoil Site: Driving south on I-95 take Exit 5. Go south on Hwy. 17 about 5 miles until you come to the Tallmadge Bridge. Just before the bridge on the left is a defunct video poker casino. Turn left on the dirt road and go behind the casino. The entrance to the Spoil Site is in about 100 yards.

Lake Mattamuskett - Nov. 15-16

Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge is legendary for its variety and numbers of wintering waterfowl. In recent years a variety of passerines have been found lingering in the thick vegetation at the refuge, especially along the causeway across the lake. Some birds seen in past trips include: Bald Eagle, Western Kingbird, Baltimore Oriole, Orange-crowned Warbler, Great Black-backed Gull, and many waterfowl species, including Canvasback, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, and Tundra Swan.

Our tour will begin at noon on Saturday when we join Kelly Davis at the Entrance Road Sign (intersection of Entrance Road and NC 94, 1.5 miles north of US 264). We'll start by birding the causeway, Entrance Road, and Wildlife Drive area. Then we'll drive by Kelly's house to see if her Barn Owls are still present. Depending on the weather and conditions, there is a slight chance we may be able to look for Yellow Rails. We'll end the day by birding in the Lake Landing area, behind the locked gates (Kelly has a key) until sunset, watching the swans and geese return to the lake to roost. We can eat supper together at the Engelhard Café Saturday night.

On Sunday morning after an early breakfast on

your own we will meet at the refuge entrance at 7 am. We can bird north to the opposite end of the lake ending near Fairfield, then drive back to the refuge sign, looking again for birds down Wildlife Drive. The plan is to bird until noon, but for those who want to linger longer, there will be more to see.

Cost for the trip is $10 and is limited to 16 participants. Mail your check with the registration form below. Bring drinks and snacks. Dress appropriately for the weather and wear sturdy shoes or hiking boots since we may do a good bit of walking on refuge roads. A couple four-wheel drive vehicles are welcomed.

Lodging possibilities for Saturday night:

Hotel Engelhard, 1-800-290-5311 or 252-925-2001
Hyde-Away Motel, 252-926-8101
The Sadler Inn, 252-926-2841
Thomasina's B&B, 252-943-2097

Any questions please contact Judy Murray at 919-942-2985 or jmurray@unc.edu.

Many birders were treated to sightings of Swallow-tailed and Mississippi Kites during July and August 2003 in both Carolinas. The Swallow-tailed Kite picture above was taken by CBC member **Randy Emmitt** near the Cape Fear River, not far from Wilmington, NC. Other rare bird sightings this summer were Brown Noddies on a pelagic trip from Oregon Inlet and Reddish Egret and Long-billed Curlew at Shackelford Banks. CBC sponsors the Carolina Rare Bird Alert. Report sightings by calling 704-332-2473 or e-mailing at PiephoffT@aol.com.

Carolina Bird Club Field Trip Form

Savannah Spoil Site—October 4, 2003
Lake Mattamuskeet—November 15-16, 2003

Please register _____ person(s) for the Savannah Spoil Site trip (no fee)
Please register _____person(s) for the Lake Mattamuskett trip ($10)

Name(s) _____

Address _____City_____State_____ Zip_____

Day Phone _____ Evening phone _____ Email _____

Enclosed is my check for $_____ for _____ person(s) to participate in the Lake Mattamuskett trip.

Make check payable to Carolina Bird Club and send to: CBC, 11 West Jones Street, Raleigh, NC 27601-1029.

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